

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 IO-10 SAI-01 NIC-01 SAM-01 ACDA-05

EUR-12 SCCT-01 EB-07 AID-05 SAB-01 CCO-00 SSO-00 /100 W

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R 301102Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5063

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

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TAGS: PFOR, IS, EG, XF

SUBJECT: TWO VIEWS RE PROSPECTS FOR EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI NEGOTIATIONS

1. SUMMARY: COMMENTARIES IN WEEKEND PRESS BY TWO MAJOR POLITICAL OBSERVERS, RE PROSPECTS FOR SECOND STAGE EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI POLITICAL AGREEMENT, SUM UP CONTRASTING PESSIMISTIC AND OPTIMISTIC ASSESSMENTS CURRENTLY CIRCULATING IN ISRAEL. END SUMMARY.

2. MAARIV POLITICAL COMMENTATOR HARIF, DEC 27
ARTICLE CONTINUES HIS GLOOMY HARDLINE PROGNOSTICATION OF IMPLICATIONS OF US NEGOTIATING EFFORT FOR ISRAELI SECURITY INTERESTS. (HARIF HAS BEEN GLOOMY EVER SINCE OCTOBER WAR.) HARIF IMPLIES THAT US-ISRAELI CONFRONTATION IS VIRTUALLY AT HAND: HE ALSO NOTES THAT THERE ARE DIFFERENCES WITHIN GOI OVER TERMS OF NEGOTIATIONS.

3. HARIF DESCRIBES EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI NEGOTIATIONS, AT OUTSET
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OF ARTICLE, AS COMPONENT OF ROGERS PLAN TO WHICH SECRETARY

ALLEGEDLY ADHERES, AND ADDS THAT USSR HAS PROPOSED TO US THAT SUPERPOSERS JOINTLY GUARANTEE AN ARAB-ISRAELI SETTLEMENT ON THIS BASIS. MOSCOW, PARIS, BELGRADE AND BUCHAREST REPORTEDLY ARE ADVISING PLO TO SCALE DOWN ITS DEMANDS AND ACCEPT ISRAEL WITHIN ITS PRE-1967 BOUNDARIES. GIVEN US CONCERN THAT SOVIETS MAY SEND TROOPS TO REGION IN CASE OF WAR, US REPORTEDLY IS EAGER TO ACHIEVE SETTLEMENT IN ORDER TO AVOID POSSIBLE SUPERPOWER CONFRONTATION.

4. AS REGARDS EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI NEGOTIATIONS, HARIF CONTINUES', US DEMAND THAT ISRAEL WITHDRAW IN SINAI IS CLEAR AND SPECIFIC, BUT WHAT US EXPECTS EGYPT TO CONCEDE IN RETURN IS LESS CLEAR. WITHOUT ASKING FOR MAPS FROM ALLON, SECRETARY ALLEGEDLY STATED THAT EGYPT WOULD INSIST ON GIDI AND MITLA PASSES AND ABU RODEIS, IN EXCHANGE, EGYPT WOULD ENTER INTO NEW AGREEMENT WITHOUT SYRIANS AND RUSSIANS. AFTER BREZHNEV'S CAIRO VISIT, HARIF WRITES, SADAT CAN BE EXPECTED TO ASK US TO INCREASE PRESSURE FOR ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL AS QUID-PRO-QUO FOR EGYPT NOT PASSING COMPLETELY INTO SOVIETCAMP. SECRETARY HAD ONCE TOLD ISRAELIS THAT ARMS SUPPLIES ARE MATTER OF PARALLELISM, AND APPEARS TO BELIEVE THAT HE CAN DECIDE WHAT TERMS ARE ESSENTIAL FOR INTERIM SETTLEMENT.

5. HARIF NOTES THAT RABIN-ALLON AND PERES DISAGREE ON POSSIBLE CONCESSIONS. ALLON REPORTEDLY TOLD SECRETARY THAT ISRAEL WOULD GIVE UP ABU RODEIS, BUT NOT THE PASSES, IN RETURN FOR FIVE-YEAR AGREEMENT AND US COMMITMENT TO GUARANTEE ISRAEL'S OIL REQUIREMENTS. PERES ON OTHER HAND IS AGAINST SURRENDERING PASSES OR ABO RODEIS. HE FAVORS SMALL CONCESSIONS FOR SHORT-TERM AGREEMENT, AND DOES NOT BELIEVE FAR-REACHING AGREEMENT ACCEPTABLE TO ISRAELIS IS POSSIBLE AS LONG AS ARABS ARE INTOXICATED BY VICTORY OF OCTOBER WAR. MOREOVER, PERES BELIEVES THAT EGYPT WILL NOT RUSH BACK TO SOVIET CAMP, AND THAT ISRAEL CAN "PLAY THE GAME WITHOUT GETTING NERVOUS".

6. HARIF CONCLUDES BY STATING THAT TIME ELEMENT WILL BE CRUCIAL. WHATEVER FORMULA IS FOUND, ISRAEL WOULD NOT AGREE TO IMPLEMENT ITS WITHDRAWAL UNTIL ONE YEAR AFTER AGREEMENT IS SIGNED. IT WOULD NEED THIS TIME TO BUILD NEW DEFENSE LINE AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ABOVE ALL TO TEST EGYPTIAN INTENTIONS UPON COMPLETION OF UNDOF MANDATE ON GOLAN HEIGHTS. IF EGYPT AGREES TO THIS AND THREE-YEAR DURATION FOR AGREEMENT, ISRAEL COULD NOT REFUSE TO SIGN. IF EGYPTREFUSES AND GOI HOLDS FIRM, RABIN WOULD FACE CONFRONTATION WITH US, EGYPT OR BOTH.

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7. YEDIOT AHARONOT CORRESPONDENT YESHAYAHU BEN PORAT, ON OTHER HAND, WRITES DEC 27 THAT RABIN AND ALLON BELIEVE NEW EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI AGREEMENT IS POSSIBLE, SADAT HAS SHOWN SIGNS OF FLEXIBILITY, AND THERE IS NO EVIDENCE OF INCIPIENT US-ISRAELI CONFRONTATION OVER NEGOTIATING TERMS.

8. BEN-PORAT, AFTER NOTING WAVE OF PESSIMISTIC PRESS COMMENTARIES RE PRESIDENT FORD'S RECENT STATEMENTS AND ALLEGED CONTENT OF FORD-ALLON MEETING, WRITES THAT RABIN AND ALLON BOTH DENY THAT THERE IS US-ISRAELI CONFRONTATION. RABIN REPORTEDLY BELIEVES THAT ARTICLES IN US PRESS DESCRIBING SUCH CONFRONTATION REPRESENT PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE BY "CERTAIN ELEMENTS" IN WASHINGTON TO SOFTEN UP ISRAEL, BUT DO NOT CORRESPOND TO REALITY OF US-ISRAEL RELATIONS.

9. BEN-PORAT SAYS THAT RABIN AND ALLON ARE BOTH RELATIVELY OPTIMISTIC. ALLON REMARKED ZT TEL AVIV SHILOAH INSTITUTE DEC 26 (TEL AVIV 7483) THAT OBJECTIVELY INTERIM
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EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI AGREEMENT IS POSSIBLE GIVEN MUTUAL INTERESTS OF BOTH SIDES, ISRAELI WILLINGNESS AND HINTS OF READINESS FROM CAIRO AS WELL AS NATURE OF TOPOGRAPHIC FEATURES OF SINAI PERMITTING THIS. RABIN ALSO HAS SAID THAT "DOOR IS STILL NOT LOCKED".

10. AFTER REVIEWING COMPONENTS OF ISRAELI NEGOTIATING POSTURE, AS OUTLINED BY ALLON, BEN-PORAT ADDS THAT IN ABSENCE OF ANY FIRM DOCUMENTATION RE GOE POSITION, AMERICANS IN CAIRO NONETHELESS SEE FOLLOWING POSITIVE INDICATIONS: A) IN PRINCIPLE SADAT IS PREPARED FOR INDIRECT NEGOTIATIONS FOR ADDITIONAL AGREEMENT: B) SADAT DOES NOT FEEL BOUND BY RABAT SUMMIT CONFERENCE OR MORE EXTREMIST SYRIAN POSITIONS: C) SADAT IS READY TO ADOPT ISRAELI CONCEPT OF MULTINNUAL AGREEMENT, ALTHOUGH FOR CONSIDERABLY LESS TIME THAN GOI WANTS: D) SADAT DOES NOT REJECT IDEA OF DEMILITARIZATION OF AT LEAST PART OF OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. DESPITE WIDE GAP IN ISRAELI-EGYPTIAN POSITIONS, SADAT ALSO HAS NOT CLOSED DOOR ALTHOUGH HIS CONDITIONS ARE HARD AND PERHAPS MAY PROVE UNACCEPTABLE. IN ANY CASE, BEN-PORAT NOTED, SECRETARY HAS NOT DEMANDED ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM PASSES AND ABU RODEIS, SINCE DISCUSSIONS SO FAR HAVE ONLY BEEN ON PRINCIPLES AND IDEAS.

11. BEN-PORAT CONTINUES THAT RABIN IS NOT AMONG THOSE WHO FIRMLY REJECT WITHDRAWAL FROM GIDI AND MITLA PASSES. HE HAS NOT YET EXPRESSED HIMSELF CLEARLY ON ABU RODEIS. HE REPORTEDLY AGREES WITH STRATEGIC EXPERTS WHO BELIEVES THAT DEEP DEMILITARIZATION OF SINAI COULD

BENEFIT ISRAEL AND IN CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES RENDER VIABLE A 200 KM NORTH-SOUTH BORDER.

12. BEN-PORAT CONCLUDES BY NOTING THAT EVOLUTION OF NEGOTIATIONS DEPENDS TO LARGE EXTENT ON UPCOMING ARAB FOUR-POWERS MEETING AND BREZHNEV'S CAIRO VISIT. IN MEANTIME, ISRAEL REMAINS INTERESTED IN MAINTAINING DIPLOMATIC MOMENTUM AS PART OF OVERALL POLICY OF "GAINING TIME".

13. COMMENT: CONTRAST BETWEEN HARIF AND BEN-PORAT ASSESSMENTS ACCURATELY REFLECTS CURRENT UNCERTAINTY OF ISRAELI PUBLIC REGARDING US INTENTIONS, STATE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF PLAY WITHIN GOI AND SIGNIFICANCE OF CURRENT EGYPTIAN-SOVIET NEGOTIATIONS. HARIF'S INTERPRETATION IS THAT OF LIKUD AND RIGHTWING PRESS. WE BELIEVE THAT MAJORITY OF CABINET IS CLOSER TO VIEWS OUTLINED BY BEN-PORAT.

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